

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KHARTO 00917 181159Z

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 MC-02
EB-08 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 IGA-02 /054 W
-----190156Z 106952 /20

R 181124Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3906

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 0917

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SU, US

SUBJECT: C-130 SALE TO SUDAN

REF: STATE 59444

1. EMBASSY HAS ALSO BEEN APPROACHED BY LOCKHEED RE C-130 SALE VIA COMMERCIAL CABLE MARCH 17 TO DCM FROM ROBERT CONLEY, PRESIDENT LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT (MID EAST) IN PARIS. CONLEY HAD RECEIVED REPORTS FROM TRIAD HERE GOS DROPPING PLANS PURCHASE C-130S BECAUSE OF DELAY IN OBTAINING FINAL SALE APPROVAL IN WASHINGTON AND LETTERS OF INTENT HAVE BEEN SIGNED TO BUY AERITALIA G-222 AND DE HAVILAND TRANSPORTS AS SUBSTITUTES. CONLEY NOTED LOCKHEED OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED OVER WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS LOSS C-130 SALE.

2. WE HAD BEEN TOLD BY VISITING CANADIAN AIR ATTACHE (REPORTED BY JAN 30 MEMCON) AS WELL AS BY OTHERS THAT GOS WAS BUYING FOUR DE HAVILAND BUFFALO TRANSPORTS, ALTHOUGH THERE SOME QUESTION REGARDING WHETHER FINAL FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN WORKED OUT. SALE IS COMMERCIAL WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL CANADIAN FINANCING, ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND GOC HAD APPROVED IT. WE HAD NOT RPT NOT HEARD OF PROPOSED AERITALIA SALE. SHOULD BE NOTED THAT RIAD REPRESENTS BOTH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KHARTO 00917 181159Z

DE HAVILAND AND AERITALIA HERE, AS WELL AS LOCKHEED, AND TRIAD PRINCIPAL ADNAN KHASHOGGIS IS LOCKHEED AGENT IN SAUDI ARABIA.

3. IN LIGHT CURRENT USG ARMS SALES REVIEW AND SENSITIVE NATURE C-130 TRANSACTION HERE, WE HAVE CONSCIOUSLY AVOIDED DISCUSSING PENDING OR POTENTIAL

MILITARY TRANSPORT SALES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS WITH GOS OFFICIALS. HOWEVER, WE HAD BEEN LED TO BELIEVE BUFFALO PURCHASE WAS SEPARATE FROM C-130 DEAL. CERTAINLY IT HAS BEEN UNDER DISCUSSION FOR AT LEAST AS LONG IF NOT LONGER THAN C-130 PURCHASE, WHICH DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL WAS SUBJECT OF OFFICIAL GOS NOTES RECEIVED LAST AUGUST.

4. ON BALANCE, THOUGH WE CANNOT CATEGORICALLY DISMISS TRIAD CONTENTION, WE DOUBT GOS HAS YET LOST INTEREST IN C-130S. IT OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT GOS MILITARY REQUIREMENTS ARE SUCH THAT C-130S WANTED NOTWITHSTANDING BUFFALO AND ALLEGED AERITALIA PURCHASES. IN AMBASSADOR'S MOST RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH NIMEIRI AND OTHER TOP GOS LEADERS, CONTINUING SUDANESE INTEREST IN OBTAINING C-130S WAS EVIDENT. GROWING GOS IMPATIENCE OVER DELAY IN CONCLUDING PURCHASE COULD CHANGE THIS PICTURE BUT SO FAR NO HINT TO EMBASSY OF ANY LOSS OF INTEREST IN C-130S. MOREOVER, IN ADDITION TO ANY STRICTLY MILITARY NEED FOR C-130S, NIMEIRI NO DOUBT ATTACHING CONSIDERABLE SYMBOLIC POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THIS DEAL ON WHICH HE EVIDENTLY HAS SAUDI FINANCIAL COMMITMENT. FAVORABLE USG RESPONSE ON IMPORTANT MILITARY SALE WILL BE CONSIDERED BY NIMEIRI AND SEEN BY OTHERS, INCLUDING HIS CRITICS HERE, TO VINDICATE HIS HIGH PROFILE, PRO-AMERICAN (AND ANTI-SOVIET) POLICY OF PAST EIGHT MONTHS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 KHARTO 00917 181159Z

5. ACTION REQUESTED: IN LIGHT ABOVE, POSSIBILITY ARISES WE MAY BE ASKED SOON BY GOS WHEN DECISION ON C-130 LIKELY. THEREFORE, WOULD APPRECIATE WHATEVER INFO YOU CAN PROVIDE RE TIMING CONCLUSION CURRENT REVIEW. BREWER

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